

A SHORT
CATECHISM

Declaring the
PRACTICAL Use
OF THE
COVENANT-INTEREST,
AND

BAPTISM
OF THE
Infant-seed of Believers.

BEING

Extracted out of two Dialogues
concerning that Subject, writ-
ten and published,

By *Simon Ford* Minister of the
Gospel.

With an *E pistle* annexed by the
Reverend Dr. Reynolds.

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1850-1851
 A SHORT
 CATECHISM
 OF THE
 CATHOLIC FAITH
 AND
 BAPTISM
 OF THE
 INFANTS OF BAPTISTS
 Extracted out of two Dialogues
 between a Minister of the
 Gospel and a Minister of the
 Law
 Written and Published by the
 Rev. J. D. Rogers
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A

Short Catechism con- cerning the Use of In- fant-Baptism in relation to practice.

Q.  What Religion do you
professe?

A. The Christian
Religion.

Q.  What is a pro-
fessed Christian?

A. One that is outwardly and
visibly in Covenant with Christ,
and a member of his Church.

Q. Are you then such an one?

A. Yes.

Q. How long have you been so?

A. I was so, in right and title, e-
ven before I was born; and I was

A

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admitted into the actual possession of this privilege in my *Infant-Baptism*.

Q. Whence do you conclude that right before you were born?

A. From Gods Covenant with my forefathers, ever since any of them became Christians, derived to me through the loynes of my next Parents.

Q. Is there then such a Covenant?

A. Yes.

Q. What Scripture have you for it?

A. Gen. 17. 7. I will establish my Covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee in their generations, to be a God to thee, and to thy seed after thee.

Q. But this Covenant was made with Abraham and his seed; how comes it then to belong to you, who are not of his seed?

A. By the grace of God, extended by, and through Christ Jesus, unto the Gentiles, who (through him) are made fellow-heirs and of the same

same body, with Abrahams natural seed, and partakers of his promise in Christ, Eph. 3. 6. upon whom the blessing of Abraham is come through Christ, Gal. 3. 14. and the promise belongs to them, and their children, Act. 2. 39.

Q. Of what benefit is that Covenant of forefathers to you?

A. Of much benefit many waies.

Q. Give me a particular account of some of them?

A. First of all, it doth very much further sanctification.

Q. What part of sanctification?

A. Both parts of it.

Q. Which are those?

A. Mortification of sin, and a new life unto holiness.

Q. How doth it further mortification of sin?

A. Because this Covenant engageth the seed of believers, as well as themselves, in a war with sin, (as the Israelites against Amalek) from generation to generation: and so they

Exod. 17.

are all born souldiers of Christ, to stand up in their godly parents stead, and take up the same quarrel against the Kingdome of sin and Satan.

Q. How doth it further our resurrection to newness of life?

A. In the work it self, in the graces therein wrought, and in the duties performed by those graces.

Q. How doth it help towards the work it self?

A. Because the bestowing of sanctifying grace upon the posterity is oftentimes the fruit of Gods Covenant with their forefathers: as that which is expressely included therein.

Q. How prove you that?

A. Out of Rom. 11. 29. where the Apostle proves that there shall be a second calling of the elect Jews, in the latter daies, to Christ, and grace, upon the account of Gods Covenant love to them for their fathers sakes.

And

And {Deut. 30. 6. 7. compared,
Ex. 34. 12.}

Q. What graces doth this Cove-
nant, as it is conveyed to us from our
forefathers, further, and promote?

A. Several graces; but princi-
pally, faith and repentance.

Q. How doth faith strengthen it
self upon that Covenant?

A. Because it looks upon God, as
a constant friend to the whole race
from which such a believer is de-
scended,

Q. But what encouragement doth
God give us to look upon him in that
manner?

A. Very much. For he is a God,
that shews mercy to thousands of ge-
nerations, of them that love him. Exo.
20. 6. And he speaks with a great
deal of affection, many hundred of
years after Abraham, concerning his
posterity, upon his account; as the
seed of Abraham his friend. Isa. 41. 8.

Q. What use do you your self make of
that Covenant, to strengthen your faith?

A. Very

A. Very much, both in *spirituals*, and *temporals*.

Q. *How in spirituals?*

A. Because I perswade my self, the prayers of some or other of my godly Ancestors, pleading that Covenant, may prevail with God to bestow grace upon me. *Rom. 11. 28.*

Q. *How in temporals.*

A. Because I know there are many promises, concerning *temporall* mercies made to the seed of believers in a peculiar manner.

Q. *Name some of them?*

A. *Psal. 25. 13. 37. 25, 26. Prov. 11. 21. Isa. 65. 23.*

Q. *Have you any examples of Gods people in Scripture, that ever strengthened their faith upon the Covenant of their forefathers?*

A. Yes, divers.

Q. *Name some of them?*

A. *1 Chro. 20. 6. 2 Chro. 12. 18.*

Q. *What use do you make of that Covenant, to promote repentance?*

A. I

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A. I make use of it, (first) to affect me with the unkindness and Apostacy, or backsliding, wherewith my sins are aggravated, from this consideration, that I offend that God who hath been a God to my Ancestors and me, from generation to generation: and depart from that God, who hath shewed a constant friendship to the whole family whence I descend.

Q. And what other use make you of it?

A. To beware of sin for the future; lest I forsake my fathers friend, (which God forbid, *Pro. 27. 10.*) and sell the inheritance of my fathers, (which Nabab would not, *1 King. 21. 3, 4.*) especially such an inheritance as God, & his Covenant are, a birth-right which none but a profane Esau will part withall.

Q. What duties of a new life doth this Covenant of forefathers further you in?

A. First, duties of Religion, or the im-

immediate service of God.

Q. Doth the Scripture give us any presidents or examples hereof?

A. Yes, Act. 24. 14. Exod. 13. 2. Plal. 116. 16. 17.

Q. What other duties?

A. Duties of relation.

Q. Shew how?

A. First, as I am a child, I blesse God for those parents, that conveighed this Covenant down to me; whereas I might have been the child of Heathen parents, and so born a stranger to the Covenant of promise as well as they.

Secondly, I think I can never do enough, to testifie my Dutifulness to those parents, through whom I am entituled to such an estate, as Gods gracious Covenant.

3^d. I resolve, if God make me a parent too, not to cut off that relation between God and my posterity, (as far as I can preserve it) which my Ancestors, and immediate parents have preserved to me; but

but maintain it, and propagate it, by keeping the faith of Christ untainted my self, and deriving it to them that descend from me.

Q. You said, a while since, that you were put into possession of that right, which this Covenant gave you by your Baptism in Infancy: What can you say to justify your baptism at that Age?

A. That seeing I was born visibly in Covenant with God, and a member of his Church, (as hath been beforelaid) it was my just right; to be admitted into it by baptism, as soon as I was born.

Q. Why so?

A. Because Baptism was appointed for the seal of admision, to set all those persons solemnly into the Church, who visibly belong thereunto. Gal. 3. 27. 1 Cor. 12. 13. Act. 2. 38, 39.

Q. But had it not been more advantage to you, to have staid for Baptism, till you came to years of discretion, and

under-

understood what was done to you, and required from you?

A. No, but I rather bless God for divers precious *uses* which I make, and *advantages* which I receive, from the consideration of my Baptism as it was then administered to me, when I knew not what was done to me, or what God required of me; & those over & above what ever Baptism administered at riper years could have yielded me.

Q. What are those Uses which you make of it?

A. The first use I make of it is, that I draw from thence Arguments and encouragements to repentance, and conversion from sin to God.

Q. How doth your Infant-Baptism help forward repentance, and conversion by way of Argument?

A. Because it affords arguments of deep conviction of, and humiliation for sin.

Q. How doth your Infant-Baptism convince you of sin?

A. By

A. By the understanding improvement of that which Baptism with water signifies, and applying it to that Infant-age wherein it is administred.

Q. *What doth Baptism signifie?*

A. The ingrafting of such a person into Christ, to receive from him pardon of sinnes through his blood, and sanctification of nature from his Spirit; which blood and Spirit are both represented by the water in Baptism.

Q. *What convictions can you draw from hence, when you see a little Infant Baptized, or consider that you your self were Baptized an Infant?*

A. I am hereby convinced, what I and every one are by nature.

Q. *Why what are you and every one by nature?*

A. Even guilty of original sin, and so Children of wrath, liable from the womb to all manner of misery here, and in Hell for ever.

Q. *What, in Infant-Baptism is it that*

What convinceth you hereof? I. A.

A. Because I see therein that the youngest Infant hath need of the blood of Christ, for the pardon and purging away of his sin in justification; and the Spirit of Christ for the renewing of his heart, and cleansing him from sin by sanctification; because there is no need of washing where there is no stain, or filth to be washed away.

Q. What farther doth it convince you of? I. A.

A. That there is free pardon in the blood of Christ held forth to those that have no worthyness at all of their own to plead for it: seeing hereby, I see in the water of Baptism, the blood of Christ is extended to Infants that cannot so much as desire it.

Q. What doth it farther convince you of? I. A.

A. It convinceth me, whither I must go for grace to renew my heart,

heart, and enable me to believe and repent; seeing the regenerating grace of the Spirit, is also represented in the water of Baptism; and the applying of Baptism to Infants, shews that they have it not planted in nature, (as reason is, which puts it self forth in ripe years;) but must wholly receive it from another Fountain, or else they can never obtain it.

Q. What encouragement have you from your Infant-Baptism, to turn from sin to God?

A. That I see therein, not only the utter want of grace, in the purest humane nature, and the necessity of fetching it from Gods Sanctifying Spirit; but behold God engaged by Covenant to bestow it.

Q. Why so?

A. Because Infant-Baptism, in a speciall manner, seals the promises of the first grace, the grace that

that makes a new heart, & works faith and repentance : which promises cannot so properly be laid to be sealed by B. ptism at riper years ; seeing these graces are required of all such in order thereunto.

Q. What other Arguments draw you from your Infant-Baptism for humiliation, as well as conviction ?

A. 1. Because I am sensible how unkindly I have used that God by sinning and lifting up my heel against him thus long, who hath taken me into his Family, and bred me up under his wing from an Infant, (Ezek. 16. from v. 1. to 34.) Which mercy was so much the greater, because it was an eminent piece of preventing love, whereby he laid hold upon mee to make me his, before I could either deserve or desire it.

2. Because I am now sensible of my back-sliding from that Covenant

venant, which was then stricken between God and me, when I could not (but by his gracious acceptance) be any wayes capable of such a mercy.

Q. How then comes that Covenant to bind you, who were, it seemes, at that time, not consenting therunto?

A. Because it was, for my benefit, by my Parents, (or Sureties in their stead) entered into in my name. Even as when a Father purchaseth a Copy-hold, or other Estate in a Childes name, the Child who is thereby entituled to the benefit, is bound also to the conditions contained in the deed or conveighance.

Q. What other uses do you make of your Infant-Baptism?

A. I am thereby warned to take heed of renouncing that God, who is a sworn friend to me, as I am a sworn servant to him from the very Cradle : and giving my self to
B sin,

sin, to which I have been so long a sworn enemy.

Q. Have you yet any farther use to make of it?

A. Yea.

Q. What is it?

A. The gathering to my self a particular assurance of Gods speciall love to my soul, in the pardon of my sinnes, and speciall arguments to depend upon God for all other mercies.

Q. How gather you assurance of the pardon of sins from thence?

A. Because, as Baptism in its own nature, scaleth the pardon of sins to the person receiving it, so Infant-Baptism in a speciall manner encourageth me to believe it, by strengthening me against some of the greatest discouragements.

Q. What are those discouragements?

A. Greatnesse of sin, and personall unworthiness.

Q. How do you by Infant-Baptism,

INCON-

incourage your self to believe the pardon of your sins, notwithstanding the greatness of them?

A. Because God in my Infant-Baptism sealed pardon of sins to me, before they were committed, upon condition of repentance, though he foresaw all their aggravations, which would render them exceeding sinful.

Q. How do you thereby encourage your self against the discouragement of personal unworthinesse?

A. By considering that when God sealed that pardon to me in the water of Baptism, I was not capable of any thing, that might, in the greatest charity, be accounted the least degree of worthiness: and therefore seeing I cannot possibly, be more utterly void of personal worth now, than I was at that time of administration, I encourage my self to plead that Covenant of pardon though I be unworthy, which when I was every

not as unworthy, was by Gods gracious act sealed to me.

Q. In what particulars doth Infant-baptism strengthen your dependence on God.

A. In all things necessary to life and godliness, that I shall at any time stand in need of.

Q. How so?

A. Because Baptism gave me admission into Gods family from an Infant, and made the Lord my God in Covenant from my mothers breasts.

Q. What do you conclude from thence.

A. That God will not forget his ancient loving kindenesses; but will be the same God even to Old-age, that he engaged himself to be in my tender years, and will not cast off one that hath been his household-servant from a child.

Q. You have shewn me what uses you can make of Infant-Baptism: what advantages have you had by it, even from

from infancy and childhood?

A. Many, and many waies.

Q. Name some of them?

A. The great advantage of all is this: That I was thereby, from a child, admitted solemnly as a visible member into Christs Church.

Q. And wherein were you privileged thereby?

A. First, in that, being actually admitted into Christs fold, I have had (from a child) a legal right to his word and the instructions thereof, wherewith he feeds his Lambs according to their capacity, as well as greater sheep, Rom. 3. 2.

Q. Wherein else?

A. Secondly, in that I was thereby committed to the special care of his Pastors, the Ministers of the Church, and had right to expect the benefit of their labours, which in some sort, I have found.

Q. Wherein farther?

B 3

A. Thirdly,

○ *A Short Catechism; &c.*

A. Thirdly, in that I was thereby intitled to all the prayers of the whole Church of Christ upon earth, which she powreth out for her own members in special.

Q. Wherein besides?

A. Fourthly, in that I have been, and am one of those to whom the promises of conversion by Ordinances, and all the promises of the first grace are peculiarly made; seeing all promises of that kinde are made to the visible Church, and its members only, *Jer. 31. 33.*

Q. Wherein lastly?

A. In that I was by Infant baptism committed to the whole Church as my Guardians, to watch over me, and care for me, that I want nothing necessary for life or godlinesse.

Q. Have you yet any farther advantages from Infant-baptism?

A. Yes, I have enjoyed many temporall mercies, and gracious providences, by vertue of the Covenant
venant

venant sealed to me by God in my infancy; which (seeing all favours from God to persons in Covenant, flow from that Covenant,) I look upon as Covenant-mercies, and bless God for them accordingly.

Q. You have shewn me what uses, and advantages Infant-baptism affords you in relation to your own person; Is it not useful also in relation to communion with others?

A. Yes, in a very large measure.

Q. As how?

A. It mightily furthers the duties of Relation to others; and is a considerable improvement of the number of the visible Church.

Q. What duties of Relation doth it further?

A. Duties of Family-relation and Church-communion.

Q. How doth it further the duties of family relation?

A. Because it quickens children, and parents, to certain mutual duties.

B 4

Q. What

Q. What duty doth it quicken you to as a child ?

A. As I am a child, I am thereby stirred up to obey those parents, in the Lord, and for the Lords sake, who took care to dedicate me solemnly to the Lord, and enter me into the Lords family so soon as I was born into theirs.

Q. But if hereafter you your self become a parent to children of your own, what duty would the consideration of your Infant baptism quicken you to, as a Parent ?

A. If ever I become a parent to children, the consideration of mine own Baptism in infancy, and the benefits thereof, will prevail with me to do for my children, what (through Gods mercy) my parents did for me : to wit, to present them to Baptism also, in their infancy, and thereby to enter them solemnly into his family, to which I my self belong.

Q. And when you have so tendered them

is there any farther use which you could, or any godly parent may make of the Baptism so administered to his Infant-children?

A. Yes, very much.

Q. Shew me wherein?

A. First, a parent that hath presented his children to Baptism, is solemnly engaged in the presence of God, and his Church, to train up his children to Gods holy worship and service, according to the principles of Christian Religion.

Q. Wherein else?

A. Secondly, such a parent may plead for spiritual graces and temporal mercys for his children, with a greater assurance of faith, seeing he can plead a personal Covenant sealed from God to them, which comprehends all these mercies.

Q. Wherein thirdly?

A. In that (as every godly parent may and must conclude comfortably concerning the salvation of his children, if they dye before they

they shew, by the fruits of an ungodly conversation, that they have forfeited their interest in that Covenant which God accepted them into in their infancy : so) if such children were baptized, he is bound to believe it the more strongly, because of the strength which Gods seal addes to his Covenant.

Q. But hath an Anabaptist Parent no ground to believe the salvation of his child dying in infancy?

A. According to his doctrine, he hath no more ground than he hath to believe the salvation of an Heathens child.

Q. How doth that appear?

A. Because it is Gods Covenant of grace and that alone, which brings salvation to any : and therefore we can have no hopes concerning the salvation of any whom we believe not to be within that Covenant, *Ephes. 2. 12.* Now the Anabaptists allow their children no more

more interest in the Covenant of grace than heathens children have.

Q. What if a Christian parents baptized little ones out-live him, and be Orphans, with what comfort may he dye and leave his children, from this doctrine?

A. He may with more comfort dye, and leave them possessed of a Covenant of Grace sealed to them by God, and sacramentally married to Jesus Christ; than if he left them deeds and conveyances of never so great value, and security, for a temporal estate; or disposed of to the richest matches in the world.

Q. You have shewed me how Infant-baptism furthers the duties of family-relation: shew me how it furthers the duties of Church-communion too,

A. First, it would, if duly considered, promote charity, whiles we look upon all such as are baptized in infancy, as Church-members,

bers, and hold communion with them, as they grow and appear fit for it, as with Church-members, till they be cast out for any offence deserving that censure.

Secondly, it is a strong obligation upon the whole Church to look to the education of such baptized little ones, as those who are fellow-members with themselves, in case their Parents, or others intrusted with them, should neglect it.

Q. What say you concerning the improvement of the number of the visible Church, by *Infant-baptism*?

A. That all Christians have cause to bless God for preserving the outward profession of Christianity, over all the world, by the practice of *Infant-baptism*, seeing millions of persons are hereby engaged to God, (at least visibly) in a solemn Covenant, who would hardly have been perswaded to oblige themselves to him so far, in
case

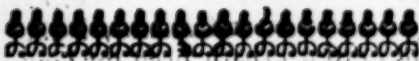
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ce rents by presenting their children
on thereunto, are engaged to train
to them up in the Religion wherein
it they are baptized, and look upon
w- it as a matter of conscience so to
ase do, upon that account.

ed *Q. What say you therefore concer-
ning your own Infant-baptism upon
the consideration of the whole matter?*

the *A. I say, that I humbly blesse
of the Lord who hath been my God
ap- in Covenant from my mothers
ve belly: and do resolve, by the as-
ng sistence of his grace, to improve
ti- my early relation to him, and the
he Sacrament in which it was then
ng sealed up unto me, to those holy,
n- and comfortable intents and pur-
in poses before mentioned; and
ld lead my life after the tenour of
to that holy and solemn obligation.
in Which obligation I do, in the
ase presence of God, and his people,*

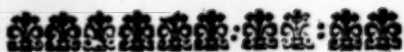
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at this time, seriously own, and
take upon me, by mine own per-
sonal consent to what was then
done on my behalf, by others.
And to help me herein, I desire
the benefit of all the Lords peoples
prayers.



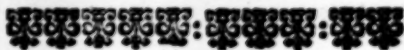
FINIS.





THe Reverend Author hath
written on this subject a large
Book called the Practical use of
Baptism.

And since hath added a second
part, wherein many Doubts are clear-
ed, and many Heads enlarged, that
the Reader may more profitably im-
prove this weighty Ordinance of Bap-
tism.



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TO THE
READER.



*T*is a special commendation of any Theological doctrine, and one very good way of vindicating it from the prejudices and exceptions of those that reject it, to discover the excellent uses which may be made of it, and clearly to deduce such wholesome practical inferences as do naturally lie couched in it. Our Saviour hath taught

To the Reader.

taught us to judge of the Tree by the fruits, for no man gathers grapes of thornes, or figgs of thistles. The Reverend Author of this little Catechism, hath therein given an experiment hercof, and as he hath elsewhere defended the doctrine, so doth he here by Arguments à posteriori, drawn from the holy and comfortable fruits and effects thereof, endeavour to reconcile it to the judgement of dissenters. A course which I wish he had as much leasure, as abilities to undertake in some other profound and abstruse Controversies, wherein the truth is often by tender palats rejected, upon pretence of invidious Consequences

To the Reader.

quences attending it, as if it were injurious to the practise of piety, and obstructive to the power of godliness. The Lord raise up continually in his Church men of healing spirits, who by their meek, learned and prudent endeavours, may through Gods blessing thereupon, gather into one the divided judgments and affections, of as many as love the Lord Jesus in sincerity.

Thine in the Lord,

Ed. Reynolds.

Imprimatur

Ed. Calamy.